

PRESS RELEASE

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Malta Chamber hosts the BusinessEurope Council of Presidents

The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry hosted the BusinessEurope Council of Presidents (COPRES) meeting on Friday, with Presidents and Director Generals of the most prestigious business organisations from all over Europe congregating to Malta for the biannual meeting.

The Council of Presidents, which is habitually held in the country holding the Presidency of the European Union met at the Agostino Portelli Hall at the Exchange Buildings on Friday where matters of importance to industry in Europe were discussed.

Welcoming the delegates to the Exchange Buildings, Mr Anton Borg in his capacity as BusinessEurope Vice President said that the meeting was taking place during a particularly challenging period for the European Union.

“Steering Europe’s economic recovery forward in the past months while facing growing populism and geopolitical tensions on our southern and eastern borders, as well as on an international level, has not been an easy feat. Furthermore, the forthcoming elections in numerous prominent member states and commencement of Brexit negotiations are further contributing to these unpredictable times - times that are far from ideal for business” he said.

Mr Borg said that COPRES was an important platform for business leaders, to evaluate and comment on the EU’s latest initiatives, such as the Pillar of Social Rights, and to discuss others initiatives that we expect the Commission to deliver.

“In light of the numerous challenges we face today, one thing is certain; that it cannot be business as usual in the EU, and consequently the way we were accustomed to do things requires changing. We CAN be part of the change. NO, we MUST be part of the change” Mr Borg said.

“There is no one size fits all solution. We must keep in mind that yes - together we are stronger, and that we need to leverage that strength in a highly competitive global economy, because ultimately it will be for the benefit of us all.”

In conclusion, Mr Borg urged the delegates present to appreciate the privileged positions they held to significantly influence Europe’s economies and societies.

“We must leverage these positions responsibly in order to benefit the stability, competitiveness and growth of the Union as a whole” he concluded.

Addressing COPRES, BusinessEurope President Mrs Emma Marcegaglia said that at this particular juncture in the life of the European Union, business leaders had an ever-important role to play to influence their respective governments to put competitiveness and economic growth at the fore of their agenda.

On Thursday the heads of delegations attended an audience with the President of the Republic H.E. Dr Marie Louise Coleiro Preca at San Anton Palace in Attard. Addressing the audience, the President said that it was only within a united Union, built on social, economic, and political values of solidarity and shared prosperity, that the storms of uncertainty can be weathered.

“I believe that is this heritage of solidarity, and a firm commitment to peace, which must guide our steps towards sustainable prosperity for our peoples” she said.

In the evening, the contingents coming from 30 countries attended a gala dinner at Xara Lodge which was presided by the Speaker of the House of Representatives the Hon Dr Angelo Farrugia.

Welcoming guests to the evening, Malta Chamber President Mr Frank V. Farrugia provided a brief background and history of the Malta Chamber. He said that Malta’s Presidency had served to give Malta a centre place in Europe’s political map as evidenced by the level and number of delegations present for the event.

“The continued resilience of Europe’s businesses depends on the effectiveness of the COPRES meeting, particularly at this time when so many uncertainties characterise the European political and economic climate” he said.

Guests were entertained by Clare Ghigo who was accompanied by harpist Britt Arens and Red Elektrick.

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